

K. Burnet / S. A. Bishop of Salisbury
SERMON

Preach'd at

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St. Bridget's-Church,

ON MONDAY in EASTER-WEEK,

MARCH 29. 1714.

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LORD MAYOR,

THE

Aldermen and Governours

Of the several

HOSPITALS of the CITY.

by the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
GILBERT, Lord Bishop of SARUM.

Edinburgh Re-printed by John Moncur, and Sold
by William Brown Book-seller, at his Shop op-
posite to the entry to the Parliament-Clofs.
1714. Price 2 Pence.

Stanier, Mayor.

*Martis vj. die Aprilis, 1714,
Annoque R. Rnæ Annæ Magnæ
Britanniæ, &c. Decimo Tertio.*

IT is Ordered, That the Thanks
of this Court be given to the
Right Reverend Father in GOD,
GILBERT, Lord Bishop of *Sarum*,
for his Sermon Preached before this
Court, and the Governours of the
several *Hospitals* of this City, at the
Parish-Church of *St. Bridget*, on
Monday in *Easter-Week* last, and that
he be desired to Print the same.



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S E R M O N

Preached at

St. Bridget's-Church,

On Monday in Easter Week, &c.

Dan. iv. ver. 27.

Break off thy Sins by Righteousness, and thine Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor, if it may be a lengthning of thy Tranquillity.

I Have not read the first Part of the Verse, for that were proper for a greater Audience, in these Words, *Wherefore, O King, let my Counsel be acceptable unto thee,* a modest and insinuating Address, to the greatest and proudest King then in the World; those which follow that I have read, are proper to every Audience, and particularly suited to the present Occasion.

Nebuchadnezzar was the great Conquer-

or of the Eastern Parts of the World, he had carried the Magnificence of *Babylon* beyond any thing that the former Ages had seen. He was as sumptuous in his Idolatry, as he was in his Buildings: an Image of 60 Cubits, or 90 Foot high, and 6 Cubits or 9 Foot broad, said to be of Gold, (supposed to be only plated with Gold) was set up by him, and he order'd a vast Symphony of Musick, to celebrate the Worship of this extravagant Piece of Idolatry; a Furnace was also prepared, to sacrifice all who would not fall prostrate before it; probably it was the Sun that was the Idol to be thus worshipped, of which Fire was the natural Emblem, to devour those who would not concur in this Pompous Idolatry. It is true, on that Occasion, God did by a surprising Miracle shew, that he had a Power superior to all the Inventions of Cruelty, which at that time had a great Effect on this proud Tyrant, as you may see in the end of the former Chapter. We have no concurring History to inform us, what was the Interval of Time between that amazing Transacti-
 on, and the Dream set down in the Edict, which is recorded in this Chapter. This Reign was long, so probably some Time had past, in which that Impression, which

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was then strong on his Mind, had been worn out by his old Vices ; in particular, by his Injustice, his Oppression and his Pride, which came soon to have the Ascendant. A severe and unusual Stroke was now decreed to come upon him, a Madness that was to make him liker a Beast than a Man was to be his Punishment ; and that was to continue for Seven Years : Yet as God had by a former Dream given him a dark Representation, but a bright one, as it was explained by *Daniel*, of a great Scene of Providence ; so by another Dream, he has now Warning given him of what was to befall himself : And this is likewise opened to him by *Daniel*. The Prophet saw it was fixed in the Purposes of God, and could not be wholly diverted, but it was possible to obtain a Prolongation of his present Quiet, some Respite might be given him ; so in order to that, *Daniel* offers in soft Words the best Advice possible : That he shou'd reflect on his Sins and Iniquities, which were bringing that dismal Stroke on him ; he further advises the breaking off, or the redeeming these (for so the Words are render'd by the *Seventy* and by the *Vulgar*) by *Righteousness* or Justice in his Government, and by Compassion, relieving the Oppressed and

the Poor, in particular those of the *Jewish* Nation, who in their Captivity were probably cruelly treated as Slaves; and upon his accepting these Advices, *Daniel* supposes that the Stroke might be delayed for some time, *if it may be a lengthning of thy Tranquillity*, so we render the Words; the *Seventy* render them, *Perhaps God may be Long-suffering towards thy Sins*; the Vulgar have it, *Perhaps God may forgive thy Sins*. It is highly probable, that this Advice made an Impression on him, and produced some good Effects: These were rewarded with a Suspension of the threatned Stroke for a full Year: But his Pride and Insolence had too deep a Root to be quite cured: Time had defaced the Good that his Dream and the Explanation of it had done him; but at the end of 12 Months, as he was walking *in* (or as the Word is *upon*) his Palace, perhaps in some high Tower, from whence he might Survey *Babylon*, and all the beautiful Decorations with which he had adorned it, he applauded himself in what he was then looking on, and said, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the House of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Honour of my Majesty?* But while the Word was yet in his Mouth, the dreadful

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Voice was heard, the Doom went out, and he became as one of the Beasts of the Field, mad to the highest Degree.

Having thus opened the Words, and both the Occasion and the Effects of them, I turn me next to the Considerations that do naturally arise from them, which are Four :

I. That when we see an Appearance of any Judgments from God, coming towards us, we ought to reflect on our Sins, as the procuring Causes of them.

II. That in the common Course of God's Providence, eminent Sins draw Judgments after them proportioned to them.

III. That the Interposition of a Change in Men's Lives, may procure either the total Removal of imminent Miseries, or at least a Suspension of them: And,

IV. That Justice and Righteousness, together with Charity towards the Poor, do conduce effectually to procure this. To return.

I. When we see an Appearance of Judgments from God coming towards us, we ought to reflect on our Sins, as the procuring Causes of them. Here we will find, besides those secret Sins, which every Man's Conscience, if he looks into it, and consults

it, will set in Order before him, much Matter for our Humiliation, when we consider what is openly done among us ; in the Face of the Sun. Secret Sins ought to be the Matter of our private Mournings, therefore I will lead you now only to consider those Publick and Visible Sins, which may be justly called *National Ones*. What a Scorn and Contempt have we seen put on our most holy Faith, which by a wonderful Series of Signal Providences was first brought to us, and is still preserved among us with Advantages, beyond any thing that we see in History, since Miracles ceased ? How is this openly attacked by many among us, with an Avowed and Blasphemous Boldness, while at the same time, others in Imitation of *Judas*, may profess a Zeal for it, as he did, who kissed our Saviour while he was betraying him ? But the greater, the far greater Part among us, seem to have no other Concern about it, but to keep up an Exterior as a National Form, without any regard to the plainest Rules that are laid down the ofteneft in it, and are not ashamed to live in an open and undisguised Course of gross and scandalous Immorality. If this is our Case, and can that be deny'd ? Have we not Reason to fear, that though *Noah, Job and Daniel* were a-

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mong us to interceed for us, they should only deliver their own Souls by their Righteousness : Ezek. xiv 14. to ver. 22. So that we may justly fear that our Land shall be desolate, and that God shall give a Commission to Famine Sword and Pestilence to pass thro' it ? And we may have yet more Reason to apprehend this, if the most Signal Blessings that we have received from God, have not only no Effect on us, but are openly despised and ill treated. The greater Part of the Nation do remember, what a desperate State of Affairs we saw 25 Years ago, from which the Revolution rescued us : which was then look'd on as an extraordinary Deliverance, as indeed it was. If it had not been for that, we should probably have been by this Time, sunk into all the Corruptions of Popery, and into all the Miseries of Slavery. Yet how is it now arraign'd ! with what bare-fac'd Insolence and Ingratitude ? Has a Race that shews such Insensibility, and makes those Returns for so wonderful a Preservation, any Reason to expect, that upon every View of threatening Dangers, there should be a new Scene of Miracles ready for us, to be set at naught by us, when a Turn is served by it ? And that more particularly now that we see a visible
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Calamity before our Eyes, that is kept off by the single Thread of one Sacred Life: If the Assertors of *Hereditary Right* will be contented, that She still sit on the Throne, which for many Years She filled so Gloriously, and will not, as they intimate they expect, surrender it up to Him, who, as they pretend, has the Right by *Proximity of Blood*, which I hope none can hear or read without Horror and Indignation. To all our other Iniquities, what gross Equivocation and Prevarication has appear'd in those Bonds, which all Mankind have esteemed Sacred, and on the keeping of them, the Honour as well as the Safety of Nations depends, I mean *Oaths, Tests, and Solemn Engagements*! There is a severe Denunciation made by *Ezekiel* in such Cases, *Ezek. xvii 15. 18. Shall he despise the Oath? And break the Covenant made by giving the Hand* (probably the Form of Stipulation, or Homage in that Age) *shall he prosper? Or shall he escape?* We may upon all these Reasons justly apprehend a Judgment like that threatned by *Jeremy*, *Jer. xvi. 1. Tho' Moses and Samuel stood before me, my Mind could not be towards this People; to which is added, cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth,* a Phrase importing their being to go into Captivity.

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To our Impiety and Ingratitude, how much Prophaneness is join'd? And to fill up our Sins, as well as to hasten on our Misery, how are we broken among our Selves, alienated from one another, abandoned to all the Excesses of Calumny and Malice? Publick, and as it were, Authorised Satyrs, false as well as Spiteful, venomous in the Design, as well as black in the Management, fly about every Day, and feed that Party-War now managed by Ink and Paper, but which may too soon turn to Blood and Destruction. These Things are open and visible, and are become as it were a Daily Bread to those, who have carried the Bitterness, as well as the Impudence of Satyr, beyond any thing that this Age has produced. By this Men's Minds, or rather their Jealousies and Passions, are wrought up to such a Degree, that they seem to be prepared for all the cursed Designs, that our Enemies can contrive or wish for.

This is our Plague as well as our Sin, and does both inflame and weaken us. It is as a Fever in our Vitals, and preys upon our Strength, and at the same time fills our Heads with Extravagancies, more mischievous than the Transports of any Fever. What will, or what can this end in! Our Enemies know that well, and therefore

have their Tools at work to feed this Heat, and kindle it more and more.

I shall carry the View of our Sins no further, but leave it to every one's Conscience to make the Application: that he may see what he has done, or what he is still doing, to heighten this black Score, that stands thus marked before God: And that we may justly apprehend will bring down such heavy Judgments, as those Sins do not only provoke, but do really procure: For these I have named, are Judgments as well as Sins; and as they are the Beginnings of Sorrows, so they are like to draw after them a heavy Course of Indignation and Wrath suitable to them: So I come to my Second Head to consider,

II. That in the common Course of God's Providence, eminent Sins draw Judgments after them proportioned to them. We have seen heavy Judgments walking all round us. One Nation is almost Ruined by a Train of Persecution and of Oppression, carried on to maintain the most destructive Wars, for half a Century, that are Recorded in any History. We have seen the rest of our Neighbourhood made a dismal Scene of War and Desolation: We have seen all the Kingdoms of *Europe* en-

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gaged in those fatal Quarrels, that have lasted long, and it is not certain whether they are yet quite terminated or not: We have born, it is true, a great Share in this, but it was a Regular one, without our being the Scene of Action: We have, indeed, contributed greatly to the necessary Defence of our selves and of our Allies, our Treasure has been wasted by it, & much noble Blood has been shed; many brave Men have fallen in the Field, acting and fighting for their Country, where they were nobly supported by those who yet survive; but to the Grief of good Men, and to the Shame of our Country, are now beyond all former Examples, left to starve or to beg; for to their Honour I speak it, They have not betaken themselves to those black Practices that might have been feared from gallant Men made desperate by Necessity, and provoked by Ingratitude. I do not hear, though there have been of late more Crimes than happen usually, discovered, that have given occasion to a more than ordinary Execution of Justice; I say I do not hear that any of those brave, but now miserable Men, have been concerned in them. I set this here in View,

to

to move you to be Charitable to those who both deserve and need it so much.

We have felt, indeed, the Pressure of the War, but have seen none of the Miseries of it; our Fields have not been covered with the Carcasses of the Slain, our Countries have not been laid waste, nor our Cities pillaged by Armies; so that our Share has been a light one, compared to what others have suffered. And why should we think that Providence should always be so favourable, and as it were partial to us? Whensoever an Enemy shall be able to make a Descent upon us, we will be the most exposed Nation under the Sun, having neither fortified Cities, nor strong Passes, to oblige them to a Stop, in that Inundation of Calamity that must then overflow us. We have no Prospect nor Hope of Defence, if such a Misery should come upon us, unless it be from those Noble Leaders, and their now scattered Bodies, that are sinking under Want and Necessity; and next to them, from the Alliance of those mighty STATES, whom some, who call themselves Authorised Writers, have so ungratefully and so injuriously provoked, treating them with an equal Measure of Scorn and Hatred. We have

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have Reason, if we look to our own disappointed State at home, and the Strength of our Enemies Abroad, to apprehend both the Greatness and the Nearness of our Danger, as well as our being in no Sort prepared, neither to resist nor to support it. I will only set before you one Powerful Enemy, from whom we may expect all that is mischievous; and yet from whom some would so far impose on the Credulity and Weakness of many, as to make them apprehend that we need fear nothing: We know the Numbers, the Zeal and Activity of those of the Church of *Rome*, Regulars as well as Seculars, who do incessantly pursue their Designs. They have in their Hands the Powerful and Secret Engine of Confession to manage all by: Besides a fixed Persuasion among them, from the Sense they put on St. *James's* Words, That *he who converts a Sinner from the Error of his Way shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins*, applyed by them to the making of Profelites, as that which will obtain a Pardon, at least of all the Temporary Punishments of their Sins (in which *Purgatory* is included;) and what is not to be apprehended from Men so animated, they see that if they miss the present

present Occasion, they can have no hope of recovering any like it; and what Encouragement may be given them to hope for Success, from any perfidious and unnatural Persons among our selves, God only knows. We see many ill Appearances, but cannot get to the Bottom of those Depths of *Satan*. We see farther, that the greatest Monarch of that Religion is now so intirely managed by that Body, from whom we know, the greatest Danger is justly to be apprehended, I mean the *Jesuites*; that he has procured a Constitution from *Rome*, the most contrary even to Doctrines received among themselves, tho' contrary to the Doctrine of that favoured Society, such as the Lawfulness of the Laity's Reading the Scriptures, the Necessity and Power of inward Assistances, and the Obligation to the Love of God, of any thing that this Age has produced, which even a great Body of the soundest among them cannot receive nor submit to. What Effects this may have, must be left to Time to discover; but in this we see what Body of Men, and what Spirit has the Ascendant, from whom we must expect a most indefatigable Industry, never to be satisfied nor quieted,

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till this *Pestilent Heresy*, as they call it, is rooted out.

Shall I next awaken you to consider, the dreadful Consequences of their succeeding in their Designs: You must either resolve to worship a Piece of Bread, with all the Train of Idolatry and Superstition that must go along with it, or to fall under the cruellest Treatment that Devils or Men can invent. In that Church, Bishops are sworn to *persecute Hereticks to the utmost of their Power*, and Kings at their Coronation, swear to *extirpate them*; they know that if they do it not, a Decree of a Council, which among them is held General, hangs over them, which has sentenced them to be Deprived, and their Subjects to be absolved from their Obedience to them, their Dominions being to be transferred to Princes, who will with more Care extirpate *Heresy*, and execute the bloody Laws of their Church against them.

If the common Methods of Legal Proceedings do not answer their Ends, Courts of *Inquisition* are sure-Engines, to which by what was done in this Nation in Queen Mary's Time, we must conclude what we may expect, if ever we fall again into their Hands. The two worst Things in
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those Courts are Tortures and secret Witnesses. In those Countries where the Torture allowed of by the Civil Law is admitted ; yet if a Man has the Firmness to bear the Question Ordinary and Extraordinary, he has his Life in Reward of it, and he is not subject to it, till at least there is a half Proof against him ; but the Courts of *Inquisition* begin with Torture, and carry it on as long as they please, till they draw every thing from their disjointed Prisoners, that they pretend to fetch out. In Queen *Mary's* Days, a great Step was made to this, when upon many Occasions, the Council ordered Persons to be tortured at Discretion which is plainly the Practice of Inquisitors; and as Depositions are secretly taken by those Courts, without naming either the Witnesses or the Matters deposed by them, so that the poor Prisoner must be rack'd till he tells all that they are informed he knows; and this is carried on without relenting, unless a Physician who stands by, tells them he is just a dying. A great Step was made towards all this in that bloody Reign ; Orders were given that there should be secret Spies in every Parish, who were to be bound by an Oath, to inform against all that should behave themselves ill, or despise the Proceed-

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ings of that poor bigotted Queen. The Justices of Peace were upon this secret Information, to bring such accused Persons before them, without declaring by whom they were accused. and to proceed against them at their Discretion. What remained to give a Court of Inquisition, all those dreadful Powers, with which they are armed in other Parts, could not be quite finished in so short a Reign. But if ever God leaves us to fall into such unmerciful Hands, we must expect that they will make sure Work, and quickly compleat what was then begun.

In all the Miseries of our Friends that suffer, it is some Comfort, and gives some Ease, though it is but of a Melancholly sort, that we can assist and encourage them, and pray for them; but when those evil Days come, then Charity and Compassion will render you Criminal: A Command was, in that cruel Reign, sent to the Lord-Mayor and the Sheriffs of this great City, to give substantial Orders, I repeat their own Words, "That at all Executions for Herefie, there should be a good Number of Officers appointed to apprehend and imprison any who should comfort, aid, or praise the Offenders.

This came soon after *Philpot* had suffered

in *Smithfield*, upon which, it seems, a more than ordinary Compassion had appeared; yet this City had then such a tender Sense of those dreadful Executions, that *Boner*, when he had prepared that dismal Sacrifice of 13 in one Fire, thought fit to remove it to some distance, to *Stratford le Bow*, which was chosen to be the Place for it: This City shewed then a true and a tender Zeal in those Matters, which has often appeared since on many signal Occasions. Whether any thing of that Nature remains yet, you best know, who see how their Tempers have been wrought on of late, and to what a Disposition our Incendiaries have brought them, in hopes to carry them even to receive and to rejoice in the Return of *Pope*. *ry*. Those Days will return with it, and then those who can think of nothing but to be made Sacrifices to that Idolatry, that will then be set up, must not look for the common Compassion that is shewed to the worst of Malefactors.

Here I have given you but a faint Description of what you must all look for, when that Day comes, which our Assertors of *Hereditary-Right* are pleading for, and are not afraid to own, (so sure, it seems, they think their Designs are laid) that even all Funds must

must be at the Mercy of the next Heir, whom they look and wish for; and if they are at his Mercy, let none deceive themselves with this vain and impious Thought, that it will cost them no more but the changing their Religion to save all. To those who have none, this will be no hard Performance to secure every thing to them: But even in this they may reckon wrong: In *France* a heavy Jealousie hangs still over those who fell in the Hour of Trial; every Step they make is watched, their want of Zeal is observed, their Children are taken from them, and every Information against them, brings them into great Trouble; so that their Lives become a Burden to them, which even their Apostacy cannot secure them from. They must either over-do Matters, and run into all the Excesses of supererogating Superstition, and even of Informing against others, or else they will be still under Suspicion. The enriching of Shrines and Relicks, the adorning Churches and Images, an affected Devotion to Saints, with the Pomp of Endowments, will be then the Tests by which Men's Affections will be judged. The bare doing what is commanded, will not serve turn: The Wealth with which God blesses any,

be applied to the Endowing of Altars, the Founding of perpetual Masses, and the Redemption of Souls out of Purgatory. A Multitude of Holidays must take Men off from their Labour, but Processions will come in place of that, which though they impoverish the Laity, yet will be turned to the enriching those who deal in that Traffick,

These are not Tragical Enlargements, but a bare Representation of what every one, who knows the Secret Principles, or have seen the open Practices of *Popery*, must know to be true: And if ever God brings us under so heavy a Curse, they will take care to entail it on Posterity; for what ever their Agents among us may talk of *Hereditary Right*, we know they have no Notion of it amongst them. Not only the departing from their own Religion is made a Forfeiture of Crowns, but even the departing from a piece of Voluntary Superstition, though not established by any Law among them.

Such as the maintaining the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, this is carried so far, that it is made a Condition in leaving the Crown of *Spain* by that Will that devised it to the present King, so that
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upon the departing from it, a Forfeiture of it is to follow.

The Life of Cardinal Laurea, written by the Abbot of Pignerol, who was his Secretary, Printed at Bologna, 1599.

By the Life of a famous Cardinal, who was the Protector of Scotland, and managed the Concerns of the Unfortunate Queen of that Nation, we are told, that the Day before her Death, she wrote her Will in *French* with her own Hand; by which, if her Son did not forsake the Heresie in which he had been bred up, she provided that the Inheritance of the Crown of *England* should never descend on him, but she left it to *Philip II.* King of *Spain*. The Original Will was brought to that Cardinal, who when he had examined it carefully, comparing the Writing with the Letters he had received from her, and having the Authenticalness of it confirmed by one *Owen*, an *Italian* Bishop, but born in *England*, he gave it with those Attestations to the Count of *Olivarez*, to be deliver'd to the King of *Spain*, upon which, if the vast Preparations of the *Armada*, called *Invincible*, had not been blasted by that Hand of Providence that has so long watched over us for good, a Title would have been set up, to have justified the Conquest; and there would have been Men found who would

would have maintained such a Testamentary Disposition of the Crown, tho' a Parliamentary one is not thought strong enough by those who seem to think that at some time a great weight was to be laid on a Testamentary one. In a Word, if we fall into their Hands, humanly speaking, there is no Redemption nor after-game to be looked for. For though they do, no doubt, rejoice to see Men at work to undermine our Establishment, they will take effectual Care to secure their own Matters, and not to run such a Risk as they did at the Revolution, any more.

The *Watchman*, as *Ezekiel* has it, *Ezek. 33. 3, 4, 6.* *When he sees a Sword coming on the Land, is to blow the Trumpet, and to warn the People; and if they, when they hear the Sound of the Trumpet, take not warning, their Blood shall be upon their own head: but if the Watchman gives not warning, and if the Sword comes and takes any away, God will require their Blood at the Watchman's Hand; but when he has done his Duty, and given the warning, he has deliver'd his own Soul.* We do our Duty, when we set these Things before you, as we do truly apprehend in them the imminent Dangers that are hanging over us: But if People will go on in their Sins and
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and in their Securities, and will say, *To Morrow will be as to Day, and better also, and will take no care, neither to prevent the Danger, nor to fortify themselves to bear it, when God leaves them to be overtaken by it; we have done what was incumbent on us, and have nothing left us, but to follow our Endeavours, with our earnest Prayers to God for Success, and to study to prepare our selves for what Share God may appoint to us in that General Calamity.*

We know that when *Peoples Hearts are fat and heavy, so that their Ears are dull of hearing, they will close their Eyes lest they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and should be converted, so that God should heal them.* Acts 28.

27. There is a Time in which God pronounces that heavy Sentence, *Let them alone, why should they be smitten any more? They will revolt still more and more,* Is: 1. 5. But we his Servants ought never to give over, to cry aloud and not to spare, to lift up our Voice like a Trumpet, and the more stupidly insensible and secure that the People may seem to be, we ought to cry still louder and louder, to see if it is possible to awaken them before it is too late; which carries me to the next Particular.

III. That

III. That the Interposition of a Change in Men's Lives, may procure, either the total Removal of Imminent Miseries, or at least a Suspension of them, and a *lengthening of our Tranquillity*: We know what Ten Righteous Men could have done to preserve five defiled Cities, *God is Long-suffering and slow to VVrath*, and hearkens to the Bemoanings of his Children, upon which after the manner of Men, it is said, *That his Bowels are troubled for them, and he will surely have Mercy on them.* Jer. 31. 18 20. We are sure the effectual fervent Prayer of one righteous Man availeth much, so if many were repenting of the Evil of their Ways, and were turning to God with their whole Hearts, who knows what such a Change amongst us might make in the Purposes of God toward us. The Reformation among us was a mighty Work of God, his Providence has watched long over it, and when as to all human Appearance, it has been often in the extreamest Danger, happy Interpositions have still rescu'd it and preserved it. We are sure it is dear in God's Sight, and we have seen in our Time so many unlook'd for Deliverances, that we have great Reason to conclude, that God watches over it for good.

But

But if God, to punish us for our heinous Sins, and to raise the Glory of a Work, that we must acknowledge is much sullied by being in such Hands, will again make it pass thro' the Fire, that it may be better purified and melted down into one Mass, united into one Communion and Body; yet those who are mourning before him for their own Sins, and interceding for others, may so far prevail, *That Peace and Truth shall be in their Days*, Is. 29. 8. so that they *shall be taken away from the Evil to come*, Is. 57. 1. but if it be fixed in the Purpose of God, as it was in the Case of the Text, yet those who *sigh and cry, for the Abominations that are among us*, Ezek. 9. 4 shall have a *Mark* set on them, so that when the Destroyer is let loose, and is to *begin at the Sanctuary*, a Charge will be given not to come near any of those upon whom the *Mark* was set, they shall *have their Souls for a Prey*, they may perhaps be called to *glorify God in the Fires*, but these shall not hurt them, they shall be as a Chariot to carry them to Heaven, God will be with them when they go through the Fire or the Waters, and lead them so through all Evil, that whatsoever their Bodies may suffer, they *shall still have their Souls for a Prey*. Is. 43. We cannot look further into the Secrets of God's Councils, but as he is pleased to open them to us; so whether the Deadness that seems to be come over the whole *Reformation* is such, that the terrible Stroaks, that we our selves have seen on other Churches, and the great and visible Dangers, that do still hover over our own, and that

that some Years ago we thought were ready to swallow us up, have neither awaken'd, purified nor united us: Whether I say, it may not therefore seem necessary, to let a terrible Storm break upon us, for cleansing and reforming us; whether this is not such a radicated Evil that nothing can cure it but the most violent Remedy, is that which we must leave to the only wise God. This we are sure of, that if it is possible, either to prevent it quite, or at least to have our *Tranquillity lengthened to us*; we have the Means to do it here in my Text: This leads me to the 4th and last Particular.

IV. That *Justice and Righteousness*, together with Charity to the Poor, do conduce effectually to the procuring of those. I know that *Righteousness* sometimes signifies Compassion and Charity, as in the Psalm, *He hath dispersed and given to the Poor, his Righteousness endureth for ever*; so that as *Sins and Iniquities* in the Text, are two words that signifie the same thing, it may be reasonably supposed, that *Righteousness* and *shewing Mercy to the Poor*, do likewise both signifie the same thing, which is also favoured by the 70 and the Vulgar, who render *Righteousness* by *Alms-giving*, yet since the more common Acceptation and Use of the Word stands for Justice and Fidelity; I shall take it in its largest and most comprehensive Sense, as it imports an universal Rectitude and Probity in every thing that a Man says and does.

This is such a Resemblance of the Divine

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Nature, who is holy, just and true, that it is the first Element and Principle of all other Vertues: A doing as we would be done by, a speaking the Truth as it is in our Heart, and a constant fulfilling all that we promise, if it is in our Power so to do, and the promising nothing but what we have Reason to believe will be in our Power to perform; a conscionable Equity in all our Dealings, neither exacting rigorously, when others are by the Providence of God, and innocently on their part disabled from performing what we may demand of them, nor taking Advantage from the Weakness or the Necessities of those we deal with, to impose or to prey upon them, the not putting sophisticated Goods on those who have not Skill enough to discern it: The not devising unnecessarily to do that which we are bound to do, and the not taking occasion by the Pretences of Law, to overthrow that which we know is morally Just and Right; here are the Characters of one, who has *broke off his Sins by Righteousness*. They are so bright and beautiful, so suited to our Reasons and Faculties, to the common Interest of Mankind, and to the Good of Society, and which is above all other Considerations, they are so conform to the Nature and Attributes of God, that he who feels himself possessed of them, must conclude, that by his becoming a *Partaker of the Divine Nature*, he has a sure Title to his Favour; his Sins are pardoned with relation to his future State, and if God in his Providence thinks fit to punish him for his
for.

former Sins in this Life, his Correction, he may hope, will be long delayed, and prove gentle when it comes on him at last.

The other Advice given, is, to *shew Mercy to the Poor*, in which it may be well presum'd, that the Prophet had the Miseries of his Countrymen in his Eye. The Root of this is, a Conformity to the Nature and Attributes of God, who is kind and compassionate, loving and merciful, and delights to do good, who is *long-Suffering, and slow to Wrath*, and who even in his *Wrath remembers Mercy*. He who feels these Dispositions in himself knows that he is chang'd *into the same Image*, and upon that he must with Joy infer, that since he is *not overcome with Evil, but overcomes Evil with Good*, his Work and Labour of Love goes up before God, as a *Memorial*, if not quite to remove, yet very much to soften even those Chastisements, that the other Parts of his Life may give him Cause to apprehend; and even when he is under them, the Sense he has of a Sincerity, and Zeal in his Readiness to relieve the Necessities of the Poor, especially of those who are of the *Household of Faith*, will be a great Support to him under all his Troubles, will mitigate them much, and procure him all the Assistance that the Prayers of those whom he has relieved can obtain for him. I will now read you a List of the CHARITIES of the past Year, in which those who have born such a Share as is suited to their Circumstances, may with an assured Confidence hope to find *Mercy of the Lord in the Day of Visitation*.

A true REPORT.

I will not presume to tell which of all these Sorts of Charity is the most valuable, as well as the most pressing: I cannot help thinking that the Education of young Persons, is the most useful as well as the most lasting of all other Charities; but yet, since no Man's Wealth, how great soever, can answer all Demands; as some of these ought to be done, and the others not left undone; so as to the Preference of one Species of Charity before another, every one must judge of that, according to the Station he is in, and the Relation he bears to those about him: And so must do as he is *disposed in his heart*, as he is blessed of God in his Affairs, as they are easy and plentiful and less incumber'd. More particularly, if a Man's Conscience sets before him the Sins of his former Life, though in the strict Notion of the Word *Redeem*, we can have no Recourse to the Mercies of God, but through that *Redemption* made by the Blood of the New Covenant, shed on the Cross; yet in a larger Sense of the Word we may conclude, that what we give to the Poor from a true Principle of Charity, will be accepted of that God, *who is not unrighteous to forget our labour of Love*. We cannot plead with him on the foot of Merit: We know we cannot *answer for one of a thousand*, and that *if he enter into judgement with us, we cannot be justified*; but yet we are sure he sets a

A Spiritual Sermon Preach'd

Value even on a *Cup of cold Water*, and reckon what is given to these his *little ones*, as given himself, which *He will return to us* an hundred fold, perhaps in this Life, if he sees that is *our real Advantage*; but certainly with *Eternal Life* in that which is to come. If then the black Apperances of many things that seem hang over our Heads, give us frightful Thoughts, let us betake our selves to these Duties of Justice and Charity, as the probablest Preservatives against them, and the surest Lentsives under them. We are now under the melancholy Certainty that the Thing in the Text hady of a *suspending Stroke*, we may rather from a Series of former Providences, hope that there is yet a farther Blessing reserved for us, which we, by applying our selves to do Justice, and love Mercy, walking humbly with our God, may hope to secure both to our selves, to the QUEEN, and to the Church and Nation about us, and to our Posterity after us, and so to our GOD of his Mercy grant, That we may looke sharply our selves to this Heavenly Way; and that we may be so successful in it, as to secure to our selves a Continuance of the Blessings we now enjoy, and at least a Lengthening of our Tranquillity.

To God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
be all Honour and Glory for evermore.
Amen.

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